

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7539
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AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
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AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ANKARA 3802

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO SECRETARY CLIFFORD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, TU
SUBJECT: TURKISH ELECTION - POSSIBLE RESULTS

1. WITH THE JUNE 5 ELECTION THREE WEEKS AWAY, THIS TELEGRAM
OUTLINES THE RANGE OF POSSIBLE ELECTION RESULTS AND SOME
OF THEIR ANTICIPATED EFFECTS. IN SUBSEQUENT TELEGRAMS WE
WILL COMPARE THE CAMPAIGN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE
MAJOR CANDIDATES AND DESCRIBE THEIR DIFFERENT APPROACHES
TO MAJOR ISSUES.

2. SINGLE PARTY WINS MAJORITY OR NEAR MAJORITY.
A. ABSOLUTE MAJORITY -- IF A PARTY SHOULD WIN AN
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ABSOLUTE MAJORITY, A NEW GOVERNMENT BARRING UNEXPECTED DIFFICULTIES
WOULD PROBABLY BE FORMED AND TAKE OFFICE BY THE END OF JUNE.

B. NEAR MAJORITY -- THERE ARE 450 SEATS IN THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. IT IS LIKELY THAT ANY PARTY WINNING 215 SEATS
WOULD BE ABLE TO FORM A GOVERNMENT BY ATTRACTING TRANSFERS
AND, IF NECESSARY, BY ARRANGING FOR PASSIVE SUPPORT BY
ANOTHER PARTY. SUCH A GOVERNMENT WOULD PROBABLY TAKE

LONGER TO FORM, HOWEVER, AND MEANWHILE A CARETAKER GOVERNMENT (PRESUMABLY THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT) WOULD CONTINUE IN POWER.

C. SINCE ANY SINGLE PARTY MAJORITY GOVERNMENT WOULD BE MORE CAPABLE OF TAKING INITIATIVES AND MAKING DIFFICULT DECISIONS, A CLEAR VICTORY BY DEMIREL OR ECEVIT WOULD PROBABLY BEST SERVE U.S. INTERESTS. NEITHER PARTY IS MONLITHIC, HOWEVER, AND ECEVIT IN PARTICULAR MIGHT BE HAMPERED BY DIVISION WITHIN HIS PARTY. THUS, WHILE THE FORMATION OF A MAJORITY GOVERNMENT WOULD REMOVE SOME OF THE FACTORS USED BY THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT TO RATIONALIZE ITS FAILURE TO TAKE COURAGEOUS ACTIONS, INHIBITING FACTORS WOULD REMAIN.

3. INCONCLUSIVE ELECTION OUTCOME

A. IDEOLOGICALLY COMPATIBLE COATION -- IF ONE OF THE MAJOR PARTIES SHOULD WIN A SUFFICIENTLY LARGE PLURALITY TO BE ABLE TO FORM AN IDEOLOGICALLY COMPATIBLE COALITION, A RELATIVELY STABLE SITUATION WOULD RESULT. SUCH AN OUTCOME WOULD SHARE MOST OF THE VIRTUES OF THE MAJORITY GOVERNMENT OUTCOME DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH 2.C.

B. COMPLEX COALITION -- SHOULD THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES REMAIN STRONG BUT BE ABLE TO FORM NEITHER A MAJORITY GOVERNMENT NOR A COALITION WITH IDEOLOGICALLY COMPATIBLE PARTNERS, A COMPLEX COALITION NOT DISSIMILAR TO THE PRESENT ONE MIGHT BE ASSEMBLED. EVEN IF THE NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP) WERE NOT INCLUDED IN SUCH A GOVERNMENT (AND IT PROBABLY WOULD BE), THE DIVERSITY OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND INTERESTS AMONG COALITION PARTNERS WOULD PROBABLY RESULT IN A RIGID, CAUTIOUS AND INHERENTLY UNSTABLE GOVERNMENT.

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C. GRAND COALITION -- ONE POSSIBILITY WHICH HAS BEEN AND WILL BE URGED ON THE MAJOR PARTIES BY MANY RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS, INCLUDING THE MILITARY, IS A SO-CALLED GRAND COALITION BETWEEN ECEVIT'S REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP) AND DEMIREL'S JUSTICE PARTY (JP). GIVEN THE HISTORICAL ANTIPATHY BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES AND THE STRONG PERSONALITIES OF THEIR LEADERS, SUCH A COALITION WOULD BE FORMED ONLY AS A LAST RESORT -- OR PERHAPS UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE MILITARY. ECEVIT HAS ASSERTED DURING THE CAMPAIGN, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH A COALITION WOULD BE A "BETRQYAL".

D. MINORITY GOVERNMENT -- IF ONE OF THE MAJOR PARTIES SHOULD WIN A STRONG PLURALITY, IT MIGHT BE PERMITTED BY THE OTHER TO FORM A MINORITY GOVERNMENT. DEMOCRATIC TURKEY HAS NEVER HAD A TRUE MINORITY GOVERNMENT. MOREOVER, THE CONCEPT OF RESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION -- A NECESSARY ELEMENT IF A MINORITY GOVERNMENT IS TO BE EFFECTIVE -- IS ALMOST UNKNOWN IN TURKEY. THEREFORE, A MINORITY GOVERNMENT IS UNLIKELY AND, IF FORMED, WOULD BE VERY FRAGILE.

4. THE TIME REQUIRED FOR THE FORMATION OF A COALITION OR MINORITY GOVERNMENT COULD VARY CONSIDERABLY DEPENDING ON THE STRENGTH AND COMPATIBILITY OF THE PARTNERS AND HOW QUICKLY THE LEADERS ARE WILLING TO MOVE. (DEMIREL AS PROBABLE CARETAKER PRESUMABLY WILL BE LESS INCLINED TO HURRY). THE HISTORY OF THE LAST FOUR YEARS SUGGESTS A PROTRACTED GOVERNMENT CRISIS IS LIKELY IF THE ELECTION OUTCOME IS INCONCLUSIVE. (THE ECEVIT COALITION GOVERNMENT AND THE DEMIREL COALITION GOVERNMENT TOOK 105 AND 195 DAYS RESPECTIVELY TO BE FORMED). MEANWHILE, A CARETAKER GOVERNMENT REMAINS IN CHARGE.

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5. MILITARY INTERVENTION -- GIVEN THE PRESSING PROBLEMS OF THE ECONOMY, INTERNAL SECURITY, AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS THAT AWAIT DECISIVE ACTION, MILITARY INTERVENTION MIGHT WELL BE PRECIPITATED BY A LONG DELAY IN GOVERNMENT FORMATION, OR PERHAPS EVEN BY THE FORMATION OF ANOTHER WEAK COALITION

(PARTICULARLY IF IT SHOULD CONTAIN THE NSP). THE MILITARY IS GENERALLY NOT SYMPATHETIC WITH THE ANTI-ATATURKIST RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM OF THE NSP. IT IS ALSO DECREASINGLY PATIENT WITH THE INEFFECTIVE, TEMPORIZING GOVERNMENTS THAT HAVE RULED TURKEY RECENTLY. INTERVENTION COULD TAKE MANY FORMS RANGING FROM THE STRONG ENCOURAGEMENT OF A "GRAND COALITION" OR "ABOVE PARTIES" GOVERNMENT TO DIRECT TAKEOVER. WE HAVE NO RPT NO EVIDENCE OF ANY CURRENT
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INCLINATION WITHIN THE MILITARY TO INTERVENE DIRECTLY, BUT THE PATIENCE OF MILITARY LEADERS IS LIMITED. IF THEY SHOULD BECOME PERSUADED THAT TURKISH SECURITY IS BEING JEOPARDIZED BY AN INEFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT, PROBABLY THEY WOULD EVENTUALLY CONSIDER IT THEIR PATRIOTIC DUTY TO SEEK A SOLUTION.

6. THE NUMBER OF POSSIBLE OUTCOMES IS ALMOST INFINITE, BUT OF THE THREE GENERAL CATEGORIES (A STRONG SINGLE PARTY OR IDEOLOGICALLY HOMOGENEOUS GOVERNMENT, A WEAK COALITION, OR MILITARY INTERVENTION), ONLY THE FIRST WOULD CLEARLY BE IN U.S. INTERESTS. UNFORTUNATELY, WE CANNOT BE AT ALL CONFIDENT U.S. INTERESTS WILL BE SERVED. A MAJORITY VICTORY BY EITHER THE RPP OR THE JP IS POSSIBLE, BUT AT THIS MOMENT, THE MOST LIKELY OUTCOME APPEARS TO BE AN INCONCLUSIVE ONE -- WITH THE DANGERS OUTLINED ABOVE.
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